Connecting Information with Imagination

Teaching Demonstration by Colleen Martin

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Many times it is difficult for students to take a vast amount of information and deduce it down to a reasonable amount. It is important for students to learn how to do this in order to create research papers that are interesting and not copied and pasted into a word document and submitted.

Summarizing information and creating an imaginative piece is also important to do with students. By letting them connect information with imagination students are able to relate to the information and truly learn it.

This lesson incorporates both of these skills. By providing a topic in which all students can relate to, as well as giving them some choice about it, students begin with background knowledge and interest. Students are then asked to work in groups to summarize the information by reading the article, creating summary sentences, and adding creative words of their own. By using their summary organizers, students will take some quiet writing time to write a poem about the season of Lake Superior they chose to learn about. As a whole group, we will collaborate to write a Free Verse poem about the changing seasons of Lake Superior using an excerpt from every student.

Regie Routman states, “When kids have prepared a summary, they demonstrate clearer understanding of the text,” in her book Writing Essentials. With this lesson, students are given a chance to become comfortable with summarizing information in order to choose the most important information, as well connecting that information in a writing piece that shows creativity and will help them fully learn the information.

The Lesson:

*Objectives:*

1) To introduce to students the idea of focusing a vast amount of information into a concise summary.

2) To have students take factual, geographic information and create a poetry piece that will help them remember the information.

3) To have students write poems about our topic, Lake Superior

4) To introduce geography words to the students that relate to our topic, Lake Superior, and have them use these words in their poems.

*Materials*:

1) Chart paper, white board, or chalk board with writing utensil

2) Geographic information about Lake Superior (one from each season)

3) Graphic Organizer to summarize information

4) Blank, seasonal paper for students to write poems on

5) Power point presentation with pictures of Lake Superior and calming music

6) “Comfy” spots in the room to do writing

*Michigan GLCE’s:*

English Language Arts:

**R.CM.06.02** retell through concise summarization grade-level narrative and informational text.

**R.CM.06.04** apply significant knowledge from grade-level science, social studies, and mathematics texts.

Social Studies:

**6 – G2.1.1** Describe the landform features and the climate of the region (within the Western or Eastern Hemispheres) under study.

*References:*

Routman, Regie. (2005). *Writing Essentials: Raising Expectations and Results While Simplifying Teaching*

Anson, Chris M. and Richard Beach. (1995). *Journals in the Classroom: Writing to Learn*

*Procedures:*

1) Discuss the idea of “Connecting Information with Imagination.”

\*Expository texts are useful, and we can learn from them by using our imagination to remember important information.

2) Guided Practice

\*Read a piece of expository text aloud to the group.

\*Using the same graphic organizer the students will be using, walk through each of the steps to summarize the piece.

\*As a group, discuss the types of poetry we could write using the summary we made:

(Acrostic, Free Verse, Rhyming, Haiku, etc.)

\*If time, write a poem together using the summary we created.

3) Introduce the idea of using Lake Superior in each of the four seasons.

4) Go over Geography Word Wall

\*Take volunteers for words they may be able to define or give information about.

5) Summarizing

\* Have students decide which season of Lake Superior they are interested in and would like to write about.

\*Have students separate into 4 groups according to the season they chose, with each group getting the writing piece about the season they chose.

(Assign reader, secretary, speaker, and supervisor to each group; tell what each role does.)

\*One person reads the piece aloud to the group.

\*By following the Summarizing Graphic Organizer, each group will complete a summary about their piece about Lake Superior by reading it, writing summary sentences, putting them into their own words, adding their own thinking and knowledge, and what they’re still wondering and thinking about.

6) Sharing

\*Call on volunteers from each group to share the summary in which they came up with for their season of Lake Superior.

7) Poetry Writing

\*At this time, students will be given the opportunity to create a poem about the season of Lake Superior they chose.

\*Have students use their summary to create a poem.

\*Encourage students to use the new words from the Geography Word Wall, as well as the descriptive words and sensory words they came up with.

\*Students choose a comfortable place in the room to write.

\*Play the Power point presentation at this time, while students write.

\*Give students the appropriate amount of time to work for their grade level.

8) Small Group Sharing

\*After students finish writing, have them separate into groups so that one person from each season is in each group to share the poems they wrote.

9) Whole Group Poem

\*If time, after students are done sharing in small groups, have them pick one line in their poem they feel is their favorite line that shows good description of the season they chose.

\*Take each of the students’ lines and put them together into a Free Verse poem about Lake Superior going through all four seasons.

*Discussion Questions:*

1) Did this lesson help you summarize information into pieces you can use?

2) How did this topic lead you to be able to write poetry about it? What other Social Studies topics could we use factual information to write poetry about?

3) Was this a good balance between information and imagination? Why or why not?

4) Could this lesson be adapted to other grade levels or subject areas?

5) Is this a lesson that will help students remember the information for 40 years, not 40 days?

*Ideas That Were Sparked After Presentation:*

1) After discussing the region of study, to introduce this lesson read a fictional or historical fictional book related to the idea you’re going to be introducing.

2) Use this lesson as a review for a test or a final assessment for the region of study.

3) If one group finishes before the others, invite them to share personal stories about the region of study (i.e. stories about Lake Superior)

4) If one group finished before the others, invite them to read a book during that time!